

Remnant Life Church  
July 8, 2018  
**Heaven: What Do We Know?**  
(Pt 1)  
Revelation 4:1-11

**(Review from July 1)**

First Heaven

- What we can physically see
  - The atmosphere, the sun, moon, and stars
  - The cosmos
  - The creation of God

Second Heaven

- Also called the mid-heaven
- This is the realm of the spirits both good (angelic) and evil (demonic)
  - The unseen places of God's angels and the fallen angels
  - They have direct access to us (the first heaven) but limited access to the presence of God
  - It is the realm of the supernatural

Third Heaven

- This the Holy dwelling place of God
- Restricted to the heavenly hosts (angels or messengers of God)
- Enoch, Elijah, Jesus, (ascended) - John, and Paul (taken there and then sent back)

**READ – Revelation 4:1-11**

Background

- The Apostle John has been sent to the Greek island of Patmos
  - A rocky and rugged island approximately 6 miles wide; less than 8 miles long
  - About 40 miles off the coast of Turkey in the Aegean Sea
  - John has been exiled there for preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the Ephesus region a little under 60 miles northeast of the island
    - Most likely by a Roman official
    - during the reign of Emperor Domitian (who followed the more well-known Nero)
    - in the late 90's
- John has just written down the letters to the 7 churches of Asia Minor given by the Angel of the Lord (Jesus) – (Rev 2, 3)
- John is then called up into the third heaven (Rev 4:1)
  - We know it is the third heaven because of the presence of the throne of God (4:2b)
  - John is “in the Spirit” (as opposed to a physical action) which is another way of saying a vision (4:2a)
    - He says this 4 times in Revelation

- John then attempts to do something that is simply not possible – describe God

What can we know of heaven from **Rev. 4:1-11**? (2 things this morning)

1. We will be able to observe our surroundings (we will be aware)

The first and most important, the centerpiece, is God upon His throne

The One no man can see and live (**Ex 33:20**)

Is now visible for all to see – our promise (**Rev 22:4**)

- What John gives us is two things about God – His position and His appearance

○ His Position

- (**v 2**) *...there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it*

i. Sitting – kah-THEY-mah – from the same root as the word kathidzo

(Greek) which means to sit in power or yaw-shab (Hebrew)

1. Moses sat before the people to judge their quarrels - **Ex 18:13**

2. Jesus sat down and taught the people in the temple courts – **John 8:2**

ii. God is sitting, in heaven, on His throne, in power, over all creation

○ His Appearance

- (**Rev 4:3a**) John uses the precious stones Jasper and Carnelian

- Jasper – like a diamond; brilliant, hard, and inflexible – representing the moral law of God

○ Just as there are fixed physical laws – gravity, thermodynamics, etc...

○ So too there are fixed moral laws given by God

○ Unchanged since the 10 Commandments – regardless of what our society says

- The Carnelian or Sardine stone (ruby in the NIV) – bloodred, flashy, and fiery

○ This is the holiness of God

○ His anger against sin

- But there is even more to it than that

- The Carnelian and Jasper are the first and the last of the 12 stones on the breastplate of the high priest representing the 12 tribes of Israel (**Ex 28:15-21**)

- The Carnelian represented Rueben (meaning “behold a son”) as the first-born of Isaac

- The Jasper was for Benjamin (meaning “son of the right hand”) the last-born

- Within this we see the portrait of Christ our Savior

- It begins with the Son who came to save the world (**Isa 9:6** – *for unto us a child is born, a son is given*)

- It will conclude with Jesus seated at the right hand of the Father in full authority (**Heb 10:12**)

- John then speaks of a rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircling the throne (**4:3b**)

- This represents the peace, calm, and serenity of God’s rule demonstrated by His great mercy
- The rainbow is first seen as a sign, or covenant, to Noah (*Gen 9:13*)
  - But Noah saw only half of the rainbow not understanding the full plan and purposes of God
  - So too it is for us today as we trust God and have faith in His will for our lives even though we don’t/can’t see the whole picture
- But in heaven, we will be in His presence and it will all become clear - the full or circular rainbow (*I Cor 13:12*)
  - In heaven we will be able to observe our surroundings

2. We will be able to see the saints

- (*4:4*) *Surrounding the throne were 24 other thrones, and seated on them were 24 elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads*
  - i. Who are they?
    1. The Bible does not specify so we can only speculate based on what we know
    2. They are not angels as the word “elders” is only ever used to describe man
      - Used first in the OT as the leaders of Israel (*Ex 3:16*)
      - Then elders in the NT church who are called on to lay hands on the sick and pray for them – (*Jas 5:14*)
  - ii. They may represent 12 OT saints (Moses, Elijah, David, etc...) and the 12 disciples of the NT church
- We are not told but John does provide some of their attributes -
  - b. Their position - seated
    - i. In authority upon thrones – rulers
    - ii. But they are at rest in the presence of God – no more struggles no more battles
  - c. Their purity – dressed in white
    - i. Always the color of holiness (*Rev 19:8*)
    - ii. We will be completely cleansed of the sin nature in His presence
    - iii. No more temptation, no more death, no more wrestling with the flesh...
  - d. Their prize – crowns of gold
    - i. This is not the same crown that Jesus wears in *Revelation 19:12*
      1. That word in the Greek is *dee-AH-dee-mah* (diadem)
        - a. All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name
        - b. “...bring forth the royal diadem...”
      2. It is a royal crown
    - ii. The word for crown here in *4:4* is STEPH-uh-nos
      1. It is the victors crown

2. The same word of the garland crown given to the athlete who had won the game or completed the race
3. Also given to the victorious general or soldier for a great victory
- iii. There are 5 crowns mentioned in the NT that believers can receive in heaven
  1. The Imperishable Crown (**I Cor 9:24-25**)
  2. The Crown of Rejoicing (**I Thess 2:19**)
  3. The Crown of Righteousness (**II Tim 4:8**)
  4. The Crown of Glory (**I Peter 5:4**)
  5. The Crown of Life (**Rev 2:10**)
- iv. Our work for the kingdom and the Father here on earth will be rewarded
  1. It may never be noticed here
  2. But God is faithful to reward His children
  3. **Gal 6:9** - *Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.*

Continue to do good and the work of the Father for His kingdom

- Exercise the love of **I Corinthians 13**
- Put into practice the fruits of the spirit in **Galatians 5**
- Live your life as demonstrated by Jesus